

**Legislation and Policy**

**UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).** On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Dáil Éireann (the Irish Parliament) finally ratified the UNCRPD, the last country in Europe to do so, despite having signed the Convention in 2007.

**Housing.** The policy focus in housing for people with disabilities has been on de-institutionalization. There are currently approximately 3000 people still living in congregated settings, as well as people who are unnecessarily going into nursing homes or other residential settings. The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011 – 2016 worked well on a number of levels, but problems continue to exist. The key issue is a shortage of social housing generally and community-based accommodation. For older people and people with disabilities there is a great shortage of accessible housing and it is not adequately matched with the appropriate supports to allow people to live independently in their own homes.

The **National Survey on Attitudes to Disability in Ireland 2017** found that positive attitudes towards every kind of disability increased when compared with findings of the 2011 survey.

<http://nda.ie/publications/attitudes/public-attitudes-to-disability-in-ireland-surveys/public-attitudes-to-disability-in-ireland-survey-2017.html>

The **Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015 – 2024.** sets out a ten-year approach to ensuring that people with disabilities who are able to, and want to, work are supported and enabled to do so. Although significant progress has been made under important headings, people with disabilities are still only half as likely to be in employment as others of working age (between 20 and 65).

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Comprehensive%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20FINAL.pdf/Files/Comprehensive%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

**RIAI**

**Statement of Policy on Accessibility, Inclusion and Universal Design** was approved by RIAI Council in December 2017

[http://www.riai.ie/news/article/riai\\_launches\\_policy\\_on\\_accessibility\\_inclusion\\_and\\_universal\\_design](http://www.riai.ie/news/article/riai_launches_policy_on_accessibility_inclusion_and_universal_design)

**RIAI Universal Design Award 2018** attracted 11 submissions, 6 were shortlisted for a site visit and there was an award winner and two highly commended projects. The UD Award winner was Newry Leisure Centre, Cecil Street, Newry. The jury citation read “It successfully demonstrated a partnership between client and architect to strive for exemplary standards of universal design. The architecture balances the utilitarian elements of the brief with the generous nature of the facilities and extends to the high quality public realm. Robust yet elegant materials, ingenious interventions, wayfinding and signage provide an excellent demonstration of inclusive design throughout. It is a truly inclusive building, with equitable facilities that is accessible and can be enjoyed by all.” Highly Commended were the Royal College of Surgeons, 26 York Street, where universal design, signage and wayfinding were successfully incorporated into the architecture and design of the building at an early stage. and a private house at 40a Anglesea Road that demonstrated a deep understanding and application of universal design, identifiable throughout the project's many bespoke elements designed to provide the occupants of this family home with comfortable, connected living spaces suitable for use by all and exemplifying inclusivity.

**RIAI CPD – Universal Design** RIAI has agreed to promote CPD in Universal Design by encouraging members to link to an introduction to Universal Design developed by the Centre of UD Australia; Promoting Case Studies of Universal Design Award Winners developed by CEUD and Integrating UD into RIAI CPD Network presentations. A successful CPD Event entitled **Housing for Older People** was held in February 2018, jointly hosted by RIAI & the Housing Agency. Speakers included researchers and architects working in the field of Universal Design and Housing for Older People. It is available online.

[https://www.riai.ie/cpd/event\\_detail/online\\_housing\\_for\\_older\\_people\\_joint\\_cpd\\_by\\_riai\\_housing\\_agency](https://www.riai.ie/cpd/event_detail/online_housing_for_older_people_joint_cpd_by_riai_housing_agency)

**The RIAI Universal Design Task Force current work programme** includes; a UDTF Sub- Group working on *Innovative Housing For All*; a Work Group reviewing the recently updated and enlarged BS.8300 and the UDTF CPD Programme that includes a seminar on Inclusive Sports Facilities scheduled for September 2018. Members of the UDTF continue to participate in standardization through the National Standards Authority of Ireland.

### **Other**

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) and Inclusion Ireland officially launched **Changing Places Ireland** on 1st May 2018 to publicise the very few Changing Place facilities in Ireland (only 7 registered so far) and to campaign for more. <https://changingplaces.ie/> Changing places facilities are a combined toilet, shower and changing room facility specially designed for use by people with complex and multiple impairments/disabilities that require the help of up to two carers. They require minimum of 12 sq.m, need to be fitted with an over-head tracked hoist system, a height adjustable changing bench, accessible wash basin, paper roll, privacy screen, peninsular WC and a shower where practicable.